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ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Energy and Environment)

GenSan signs accord on water treatment facility

(Source: MindaNews Online – 2/16/08)

GENERAL SANTOS CITY (MindaNews/16 Feb.) -- The city government here has forged an agreement with a research and development firm to assist in its preparations for the development of the proposed water treatment facility for the city central public market.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said the city signed a memorandum of agreement with the Basic Needs Services–Philippines (BNSP) last week for the preparation of the detailed engineering design and detailed cost plan for the proposed water treatment project.

Acharon said the establishment of the facility is part of the local government's environmental development and waste management initiatives.

The city government has allocated at least P6 million for the development of the project.

He said the project is a joint undertaking of the city government, the United States government through the US Agency for International Development-funded Philippine Environmental Governance Project (EcoGov), Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Engineer Jonas Maronilla, BNSP coordinator, said the proposed decentralized wastewater treatment system "is an easy to use, inexpensive, reliable and

compact treatment system that meets discharge standards and reduces pollution levels."

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney earlier expressed concern over the preservation and protection of the area's environment, especially the Sarangani Bay.

She urged cooperation among local government units to effectively confront the environmental challenges in the area.

Acharon lauded the US government for extending support anew to the city by helping realize the wastewater system project.

"Surely this will benefit not only the people inside the public market but will most certainly play a big role in the preservation of the bay, which is the source of livelihood to a lot of people. It is our duty to protect it and by means of this project, the polluting our marine life at the bay will be minimized," he added. (Allen V. Estabillo/MindaNews)